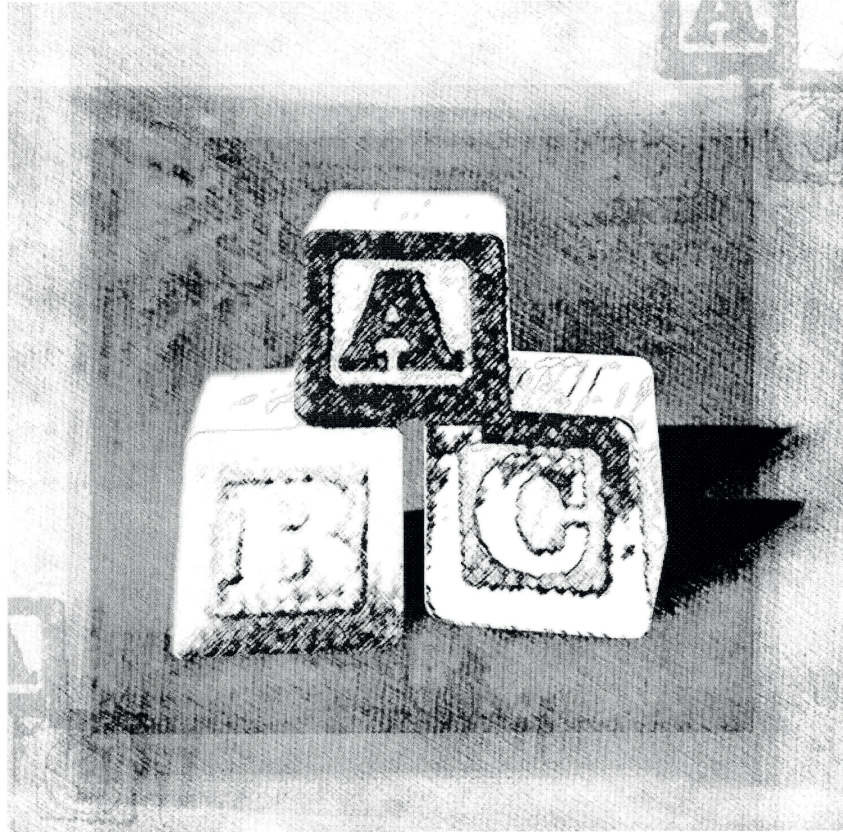


Poynter Institute for Media Studies



E-LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

SEPT. 13, 2002

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Section 1 / Introduction and Our Vision

Poynter, like the journalism industry it serves, is at a crossroads.

Demand for Poynter training has never been greater, yet dwindling training budgets and other economic realities make it impossible for us to meet the hunger that exists in newsrooms for more and better training.

About 1,000 participants travel to St. Petersburg every year to learn in our seminars and conferences. Another several thousand gather at National Writers and News Leaders Workshops. But many others are frustrated by their inability to benefit from exposure to Poynter lessons, principles and faculty.

As media companies continue to cut training funds – not that large to begin with – Poynter faces a dilemma. How do we, given our own budgetary realities, fulfill our mission to teach and inspire journalists and media leaders if they – and we – can't afford to bring them to us?

The success of the Poynter.org Web site, especially since Sept. 11, illustrates the potential to reach increasing numbers of journalists, teachers, students and citizens whose only contact with Poynter is through their computers.

E-learning—Poynter training that is self-directed, self-contained and available from a distance—offers a timely and creative solution to extend our reach to improve journalism and society without overextending our fiscal and human capital.

Self-directed means Poynter online courses would provide material—readings, audio/video commentary, exercises—that participants could study, experience and interact with on their own timetables.

Self-contained means Poynter online courses, especially in the early stages, would not require extensive time commitments from our already overextended faculty. Other experiments in e-learning foundered because they imposed overwhelming demands on course instructors and moderators. Poynter E-Learning would provide faculty expertise and feedback through interactive elements [e.g., self-checks and self-tests, exercises] and embedded commentary and assessments.

Poynter E-Learning offers the potential to extend and broaden our reach to a wide range of constituencies and audiences who may not be able to come to Poynter. E-learning can take Poynter teaching and our principles to them. These include:

- Professional journalists who can profit from the mix of basic and advanced skills courses regardless of how long they have been in the profession.
- Student journalists in high school, college and graduate programs whose education can be enhanced by exposure to Poynter teaching.
- Professional organizations, in partnership with Poynter, who can offer their members affordable training.
- Citizens who gain a greater understanding of the media's role in a democracy.
- Freelance writers, newsletter editors, corporate communicators and the increasing number of Internet content providers who don't fall within traditional definitions of the journalist.

Consider these snapshots from an imagined day of Poynter E-learning

1 a.m.

In a newsroom somewhere on the planet

Her shift ended, a copy editor logs onto Poynter.org and resumes work on an online ethics course developed by Bob Steele, Poynter ethics leader. The course is designed with case studies and exercises to help the copy desk—journalism's last line of defense but the group least likely to receive training—handle the daily challenges to report news that is fair, accurate and balanced.

10 a.m.

Twenty news-writing students in a college news lab spend an hour online on "Effective Lead Writing," an example of basic skills training course that is increasingly in demand for professional as well as student journalists. Among their assignments: The Great Lead Hunt, which requires them to find examples of summary and narrative leads and complete a lead writing exercise that provides examples written by professionals and commentary from Poynter's Chip Scanlan.

12:30 p.m.

A newspaper writing group takes up the topic of storytelling at its weekly brown bag by discussing their reaction to a multimedia online lecture on "Narrative Sequencing" delivered at a recent Poynter seminar by Pulitzer Prize winning feature writer Thomas French. They watched the lecture when they had time at work or at home.

2 p.m.

A high school language arts teacher leads her class in a discussion of diversity using material contained in "Listening Posts," a Poynter online course with Poynter's diversity director, Aly Colón.

4:30 p.m.

Newsroom managers at print and broadcast companies scattered around the globe participate in a "Performance Coaching" course taught by Lillian Dunlap and Gregory Favre of Poynter's leadership faculty. Using a series of self-testing, the managers get almost instant feedback. They can also share their reactions in a private "chat" room for this course.

7 p.m.

A citizens group gathers for their monthly meeting. The topic: The Role of the Media. They begin by watching an online lecture by Jill Geisler, head of Poynter's leadership faculty, that features interview clips with broadcast and print news leaders. The group organizes their discussion around talking points provided as part of the course.

7:30 p.m.

A television newsroom convenes for a debrief of the evening newscast and screens "Best of TV News." Compiled by Al Tompkins, from prizing winning entries, Poynter's Broadcast Group Leader," the module offers stories along with deconstructions of craft, ethics, diversity and other relevant issues.

10 p.m.

Around the globe, members of the National Press Photographers Association take part in an Advance Picture Editing course taught online by Poynter's Visual Journalism leader Kenny Irby. The course features interactive elements that allow participants to edit photo packages and compare their results with others, including the professor's.

The imagined day is our vision for the future of Poynter E-Learning. What follows is our plan to make it a reality.

Section 2 / Need and Tasks Ahead

Training opportunities for journalists are more important than ever. While news executives recognize this fact, they also are struggling to make effective use of their newsroom budgets. Journalists themselves want more training. Yet they are struggling to find the time within their own busy schedules, at work and at home.

Poynter has an important role in helping both journalism organizations and individuals broaden their understanding of the many issues confronting the news media. With the emergence and development of the public Internet, online teaching, or e-learning, has finally become a viable educational tool for Poynter to use.

An e-learning program at Poynter will focus on extending and expanding the Institute's mission. An e-learning program is not a replacement for what is taught on the campus in St. Petersburg or in the scores of workshops around the country. By providing e-learning courses beyond its current curriculum, Poynter will reach a wider group of professional journalists. For example:

- The journalists who apply to Poynter and are not accepted; Poynter accepts less than half of those who apply. This means only 1,000 journalists are able to attend Poynter seminars annually.
- The journalists who want training but work for news organizations where training dollars are limited or not available.
- The journalists who are just starting in the business and don't qualify for a Poynter seminar [applicants must have several years of working experience].
- The journalists outside the U.S. who can't afford to come to Poynter but who are fluent in English

E-learning is an opportunity that Poynter need not tackle alone. It could be a chance for the Institute to work with journalism associations to help develop courses that meet the needs of the groups' membership and serve the industry as a whole.

While Poynter faculty teaches at a number of other events – conventions and workshops – those activities are generally for a day or less and often much less interactive. An online learning program could extend what is being taught at those events with additional and related teachings.

E-Learning is also an opportunity for Poynter to work more closely with journalism educational institutes to assist in training of students. Poynter's expertise in a number of specialized areas – ethics and visual journalism, for example – are of great importance to university and college faculty.

Even at the high school level, basic journalism skills could be offered by Poynter. Many high school journalism teachers could benefit by having students learn via Poynter's courses.

The potential student body for a Poynter e-learning campus is large.

OUR EXPLORATION

During the first half of 2002, Poynter examined the potential of e-learning by studying the nature of teaching at the Institute and the material used. We explored the unique and powerful dynamics of a Poynter seminar.

We also looked at the wealth of material that the faculty has already created, either for seminars or for outside publications, such as the Poynter Web site or college-level textbooks and other books.

A timely example of developing e-learning courses from Poynter's Web site comes from this week's presentation of newspaper front pages from Sept. 11-12, 2001 and Sept. 11, 2002. This gallery of pages was accompanied by commentary from Poynter faculty member Monica Moses, who used her visual journalism teaching skills to educate users about the design choices made by each paper. Also included were explanations from each paper, as provided.

This project could be extended to a wider audience based on the work that has already been done by Monica and the Web team. In an online classroom setting, the instructor could provide more "behind the scenes" information than it made sense to publish, and the students could discuss design with each other [and their teacher] about the process and decisions and how to improve both.

There could also be interactive possibilities, with students submitting additional pages for group discussion. With some additional material, this Web site project could be developed into a full-scale e-learning module.

The Poynter e-learning work group also studied these issues:

- **Understanding the need.** The need for training is a constant in our industry. A survey of the News Coaches listserv group showed 87% of those who responded were "very interested" or "somewhat interested" in Poynter offering e-learning courses. This result is much higher than the results from a recent survey for the Presidents Council of National Journalism Organizations. In that survey, 48% of news executives who responded were very interested in using e-learning training. More specifics from this survey are available in Section 6 of this report.
- **Testing the concept.** A prototype e-learning course was developed and given to this year's summer-program fellows at Poynter. The course -- *Effective Lead Writing* -- was based on Chip Scanlan's recently published reporting and writing textbook. The feedback from the students was encouraging and Chip reported a very positive experience as Poynter's first e-faculty member. See Section 5 for details.
- **Understanding the earlier efforts.** The American Press Institute has announced another attempt at online training. A candid assessment by API of what worked and what is different with their current e-learning efforts can be found in Section 3 of this report.
- **Experiences elsewhere.** Universities have been teaching via online methods for several years. In Section 4 we explore how universities are using online to teach courses in journalism and known pitfalls we might avoid.
- **Survey of faculty.** A short survey was sent electronically to faculty, affiliates and associates. The survey's goal was three-fold: Identify potential course topics that could be developed; comprehend the level of concern regarding faculty commitment; and understand the level of interest. Survey results are in Section 7.

TIMELINE STAGES

The development of an e-learning curriculum at Poynter will be more successful if accomplished in a series of stages. At each stage, there would be a review of successes and failures and discussion of when to move to the next stage. Here are the possible stages.

STAGE A

This would consist of one or two self-paced courses.¹ One course would be the *Effective Lead Writing* course developed for the summer program. The second might be in the Ethics or Leadership area so we might test the effectiveness of this kind of course. These self-paced courses would have very targeted material and would be generally skills-based.

The Audience: We would work closely with selected members in the News Coaches group to enroll students in this early stage program who understood that this is a “prototype.” While we would not make this a “secret program,” there would be no marketing for these courses.

The Outcome: Stage A would provide us with more experiences and knowledge about e-learning at Poynter. We would use these students as a “focus group” on successes and failures of e-learning’s content and form. This stage also would allow us to test the software and presentation format.

The Timeline:² First quarter of 2003.

STAGE B

Stage B would feature the addition of three to five more e-learning programs, all self-paced courses. These courses would have very targeted material and would be generally skills-based. We would identify key areas where Poynter’s expertise could be used to provide or expand on basic skills, content and ethics/values training.

The Audience: While the program would have more visibility, we would do little marketing for these courses. Again, we would work closely with newsroom managers and the News Coaches group to enroll students.

The Outcome: Stage B would provide a solid testing stage for the e-learning experiences and knowledge gained during Stage A. It would allow Poynter to evaluate both the potential of e-learning for its existing curriculum areas and having e-learning courses for students coming to seminars.

The Timeline: By the end of the second quarter of 2003.

STAGE C

This stage would build upon the efforts of Stage B, assuming they are successful. We would add courses, hopefully across the full-range of Poynter expertise. At this time, we would also explore inviting journalism groups and associations to help develop more skills and content-based courses. For example, we might approach the Environmental Journalists Association to develop a co-branded course on water issues. Or we might work with the ACES group to create training modules for copy editors. At this stage we might explore the possibility of “real time” events³ for certain classes. These courses would require availability and interest of faculty members. Other groups might include RTNDA/RTNDF, SND and APME.

The Audience: There would be marketing efforts to make journalists aware of Poynter e-learning courses.

¹ A self-paced course is one where the student can use at his or her own time and location. It does not require a teacher to be on duty. Sometimes these courses are called asynchronous teaching.

² This assumes funding is available and resources – people and software – are in place.

³ This is sometimes referred to as synchronous learning. It means having a set day and time for students to gather and communicate with a faculty member or teaching assistant.

The Outcome: With a richer offering of courses, assuming we get cooperation and content from journalism group and associations, we would have the start of a full e-learning curriculum. This would also provide Poynter the greatest opportunity to decide how e-learning works with existing seminars.

The Timeline: By the end of the third quarter 2003 or first quarter of 2004

STAGE D

Building upon the three previous stages, the Poynter e-learning curriculum would expand to all types of online learning experiences. Some e-learning courses could be tightly integrated with existing seminars and could be required learning prior to coming to St. Petersburg. Other e-learning courses would provide skills and content courses that young professionals could take while on the job. Finally, we could work with universities and/or high school teachers to provide specialized courses to their students. These e-learning experiences could draw upon the unique expertise of the Poynter faculty. Courses in Stage D would be a mix of self-paced and real-time [synchronized].

The Audience: Poynter would expand class enrollment from U.S. professional journalists to include journalism students and journalists outside the U.S.

The Outcome: A complete e-learning program that is both independent and complimentary to Poynter's seminars, workshops and other learning events.

The Timeline: Start of the first quarter of 2005

RESOURCES NEEDED

While it is difficult to develop a specific or line-item budget at this time, we have identified some of the resources needed to develop and manage an effective e-learning program. Key to this effort will be two or three staff roles.

Leader: The e-learning program should have a director who has journalism skills [print, broadcast and/or online], managerial skills, technical awareness of the Internet and e-learning, and a proven ability to teach [either via presentation, seminar and/or writings]. This person would have an understanding of the mission and values of Poynter and would ensure those are reflected within the e-learning program. The program director would work with faculty members to develop course content.

Producer/Teaching assistant: The producer would assist the director in assembling course materials, developing unique e-learning items, such as quizzes or other self-assessment tools for the students. The producer would also work with faculty, as directed, and monitor course activities by students.

Freelance/Visiting faculty: Funds would be budgeted to compensate any outside faculty who work on the development and/or teaching of e-learning modules.

Freelance/audio-video: Funds would be budgeted to pay for the capture of video and audio at Poynter seminars or other events for use in e-learning modules.

There will also be the following costs:

Software: There will be the need for what is known as "course management software"⁴ for this program. This should be integrated into the new Poynter Online software platform. Actual cost is unknown at this time. Initially, so the program can be launched quickly, there might be a small investment in an e-learning application service provider, such as eCollege. [See Section 5 for a description of how eCollege was used for Lead Writing course earlier this year].

⁴ Course management software provides tools for managing enrollments, tracking attendance and completion of work, automatic grading of certain exercises and the ability to share content across different courses.

Hardware: Cost of computers for e-learning staff. Possible bandwidth cost to serve content via the Internet.

Other expenses: Cost of eventual marketing to journalists, associations and education institutes; travel to association meetings, etc.

CONCLUSION

The need for more training has never been more apparent and yet newsrooms are struggling to find cost-effective solutions. E-learning could be an important method of providing that training.

With Internet access widespread [62% of U.S. households are online today and by 2005 that number will be almost 75%⁵] the development of a low-cost e-learning curriculum is much easier than experiments 10 years ago. The risk is greatly reduced and the potential audience much greater – at work and at home.

E-learning is an opportunity for Poynter that is much broader than taking its content on line. When the e-learning faculty group met to brainstorm the question about “why we should do this?” there were more than two dozen possible reasons. Here are some of the important reasons identified by the group:

- To extend Poynter’s reach and mission; increasing our ability to teach
- To reach more journalists; many journalists who will never have the opportunity to come to the Institute.
- To whet the appetite of journalists for coming to Poynter seminars; this becomes a way to increase the importance of Poynter seminars. E-learning is also a tool that could be used in conjunction with seminars.
- To provide transitional skills and cross training opportunities; as more journalists are asked to do different jobs, Poynter could provide a leadership role in making sure those journalists have the tools needed for their new roles in news organizations.
- To touch the spirit and minds of the “hidden” or citizen-journalist; this could be an opportunity to help those who don’t see themselves as journalists, but who are publishing material.
- To allow more citizens to understand what journalists do and why they do it
- To allow faculty and others to share the lessons learned in values and experiences
- To build on relationships with other journalism organizations
- To build connections to newsroom / corporate trainers
- To redefine Poynter as we know it today and position it to meet future training needs

During our discussions, Chip Scanlan offered this perspective:

“One of the hardest things about teaching at Poynter is having to say ‘No’ to people who want to come learn with us. It’s painful and seems self-defeating to disappoint someone who wants to improve their skills just because applications outnumber available slots or there isn’t enough training money to go around.

“E-learning offers the chance to say ‘Yes’ to many more people who want and need Poynter training to be the best journalists they can be.”

It is time for a Poynter e-learning program.

⁵ Jupiter Internet Population model, July 2002

Section 3/ The Innovator: API

Perhaps the most relevant e-training experience for Poynter to consider is the new distance learning initiative launched by the American Press Institute this summer. What follows are detailed observations from telephone conversations with a key API executive and two newspaper customers of the e-training. API's most recent experience indicates that a successful e-training program for Poynter will probably require:

- Extraordinarily close coordination between the Poynter e-training director and the point person at the newsroom. [There may be some wisdom in API's strategy of starting out on a paper-by-paper basis rather than drawing participants from scattered locations.]
- We need to come up with creative incentives and drivers to counteract natural tendencies toward procrastination/distraction that will challenge the completion of e-training courses in newsrooms.
- We need something that differentiates Poynter e-training from other programs. Identification with recognized faculty in course creation [even with limited faculty involvement during the course itself] can help. But it would probably help more to figure out some controlled mechanism that involves the star of the show; perhaps a one hour conference call during the week that participants can call into and/or a one hour online chat.

In summary, the most interesting opportunity Poynter faces in this area is to go to school on the challenges others have encountered but not yet successfully addressed.

API'S SECOND VENTURE INTO E-LEARNING

Journalism e-learning is such a small niche within a niche that it's difficult to pinpoint many lessons or landmines.

The American Press Institute [API] has broken most of the ground – and has found much of it unyielding to its efforts so far. API Associate Director Mary Lynn Billitteri, who has led the initiative with API Vice President Warren Watson, was quite forthcoming in a telephone conversation about what API has done and why.

The organization's initial effort, undertaken several years ago, was quite ambitious. For each course, API hired both a content developer and an online facilitator. Participating journalists were expected to show up online at various times during the courses, which ranged from three to five weeks in length. API secured a license for First Class software, a conferencing/messaging tool that required significant tweaking and maintenance by technical staff at API's Reston, Va. headquarters.

Class fees never came close to matching expenses, driven up, in part, by the need for the contract teachers and facilitators to spend many hours online with participants.

Although the courses enabled participants to complete some of the work at their own pace [in the parlance of distance learning, that's known as an asynchronous task], the course design also presumed significant simultaneous, or synchronous, participation and discussion online. That created significant challenges for participants scattered across various time zones and for the teachers/facilitators trying to juggle the online events. API eventually disbanded its efforts.

Among the factors prompting API to try e-learning again, according to Billitteri, was a strategic decision to focus its classroom training on leadership topics rather than craft/skill issues. Because API remains committed to teaching craft development on

both the business and news sides of newspapers, distance learning emerged as a way of doing so without blurring the focus on leadership for its seminar sessions in Reston.

This time around API settled on an approach to e-training that would cost less to produce and deliver – and cost less for journalists and their newsrooms to obtain. Here are the key differences between API's latest initiative and its earlier program:

- Individual journalists are not eligible to sign up for the current courses. API is marketing the program to newspaper companies -- Calkins Newspapers and Ottaway Newspapers for openers, along with *The Telegraph* in Nashua, N.H.
- Instead of hiring subject matter experts [SMEs] and online facilitators, API is contracting with experts who also agree to handle the online facilitating. Typically, the organization is hiring a retired editor – or a retired or former circulation or advertising executive -- to handle all aspects of the course.
- In an effort to manage and reduce instructor time, API says participants should not expect any one-on-one attention from instructors in the new program. Instructors are asked to generate group discussions about common topics.
- The courses are more limited in duration, with the expectation that participants will invest about eight hours over the course of a week as opposed to many more hours over three to five weeks in the earlier program.
- Instead of using the First Class application or some of the more recent e-learning software options [Blackboard or eCollege, for example], API is relying on PowerPoint for the Web and the discussion software on the API web site.

Other problems encountered so far:

- Although the \$150 per seat price tag is significantly cheaper than API charged for its earlier, more elaborate e-training courses, Billitteri said it is still encountering resistance to the price. As she put it, "Everybody seems to think that, if it's on the Web, it should be free."
- Although its asynchronous approach would appear to be ideal for self-paced learning, Billitteri waves a red flag in front of anyone who expects that to happen without a local champion. In fact, she says: "Self-paced learning is just not going to happen in a newsroom." She said API encourages the contracting newspaper company to assign a staff member as the local champion to make sure the online work is getting done. "Sometimes the trickiest part," she added, "is getting the supervisor [of the participants] on board."
- Despite increased availability of the Web in general, staffers in many newsrooms are still working on dumb terminals. "We don't have the problems of teaching people about the Web or e-mail that we had the last time," Billitteri said, but she noted that access to the Web and to such software as PowerPoint remains a problem in some locations. Billitteri also said she misses some of the interactive capability provided the First Class software.

Billitteri's candid assessment of the challenges facing journalism e-training should not be interpreted as pessimism about API's latest venture. She sounds genuinely intrigued about the possibilities. Although it's too soon to judge the results of the new initiative, we need to stay in touch with Billitteri and Warren Watson about the API program.

They – and API – might become good partners for Poynter, if we discover a way to develop an e-learning infrastructure that can be shared by various journalism organizations.

THOUGHTS FROM A PUBLISHER AND AN EDITOR ABOUT USING API'S PROGRAM

One of the first newspapers to participate in API's latest e-training program was the *Beaver County Times*, a 42,000 circulation daily in Pennsylvania. It is part of the Calkins group that contracted for a batch of e-training from API. Telephone conversations with two key people there – Publisher Alan Buncher and Chief Copy Editor Jim Pane – provided some valuable cautions as we consider possible approaches for Poynter.

Before becoming publisher, Buncher was the paper's top editor. He knows the issues and personalities in the newsroom, and understands the kind of training his staff needs to get better at what they do. Pane functions as a working copy editor as well as a supervisor. His involvement with the API e-training included taking the courses as well as trying to persuade others to do so.

"The concept is a good one," Buncher says of the API plan. It was the execution that was the problem. And Buncher lays the responsibility for that at the level of the participating newspaper. For such programs to succeed, of course, the training organization must help participating newsrooms anticipate and address the kinds of problems he and Pane described. [He said circulation and advertising staffers participated fully in the API e-training aimed at them and reported "some measure of success." Not a ringing endorsement, but significantly higher marks than the newsroom people offered.]

Buncher seemed to welcome the opportunity to vent a bit on the topic: "One of the constant complaints from our employees – especially people in the newsroom – is that they need training, they're willing to do anything to get the training they need!"

The problem, he says, is that "after we got everything set up and going – and we assigned more seats to the newsroom than circulation or advertising – the newsroom stayed away in droves. Nobody [in the newsroom] wanted to participate."

Maybe not "nobody." But the numbers aren't encouraging: Calkins paid for 12 seats [at \$150 per seat] for an e-training course in headline writing and 10 in basic copy editing. Six staff members participated in each, with Calkins paying the same price for unfilled seats as it paid for the participants.

Buncher said he knows both of the instructors API used for the courses – Curt Hazlett of the *Portland Press Herald* for copy editing and Kenn Finkel [formerly with the *Dallas Times Herald*] for headline writing – and describes them as "high quality people."

Buncher said the paper assigned staffers to take the courses, and told them they would be paid overtime to do so. He said he learned of the limited participation belatedly, and regretted not challenging staffers who had blown off the assignment more directly. Among their complaints, he said, was insistence that they were too advanced in their careers to benefit from a "basic" copy editing course.

Pane, the chief copy editor, offers a perspective somewhat closer to the people for whom the courses were intended:

"We got started late on one of the courses. In one case, the instructor needed to bow out at the end so there wasn't a lot of good feedback just when we needed it. ... We had other work to do as well. We were told to set aside an hour a day to devote to this, but it didn't work that way. It's not the same thing as going away to a seminar. I did some of my course at home, but I didn't want to ask people to do that unless they made it part of their [work] day."

So how might a newsroom and a training organization learn from these problems? Publisher Buncher: "We newsroom people are a different breed. We have to understand that first. If we really want to do some training that's meaningful and give people what they want, we need to make sure that – before any steps are taken – we have a face to face, one on one conversation – not e-mail, not in a meeting – with each individual. 'Do you agree you need some help with your copy editing? OK, you do. Do you agree you'll participate in training that involves these specifics?' If there's any hesitancy, forget it! It'll be a waste of time and money!"

Chief Copy Editor Pane suggests conducting the training each day at the beginning of each participant's shift.

He also added: "If you want to invite us to St. Pete, we'll enjoy the sun and do the seminars there. How about that?" As we dig deeper into specifics, we clearly need additional conversations – as well as some brainstorming sessions aimed at solutions – with Buncher and Pane and other participants in API's latest round of courses. And we should keep an open door to further conversations with API as to the sharing of the e-learning infrastructure.

Section 4/ Experience of Educators

We know that distance learning has augmented, enhanced and sometimes replaced classroom courses in universities for decades. Those early courses addressed the two problems of people unable to travel to the campus and people unable to have access to experts. Today's access to the World Wide Web brings resources never envisioned by e-learning pioneers. Today e-learning adds an unparalleled opportunity for interactive and collaborative learning. Through it universities and colleges are extending their reach and continuing the education of millions.

As reported by the Web-based Education Commission, 40 percent of all college classes used Internet resources as part of the course in 1999. The Commission predicted that by 2002, 84% of four-year colleges would have full-fledged distance learning courses. Looking towards the future, this might mean that young journalists will be more comfortable with e-learning as a way to further their education after graduation. Developing e-learning now would put Poynter in a unique position to serve the training needs of these professionals.

WHAT CAN POYNTER LEARN FROM COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES?

From interviews with journalism professors and academic research on the topic, we uncovered several lessons: E-learning is being used successfully to enhance existing courses and as stand-alone courses. Not all subjects, however, can be taught effectively online. Online courses may not be cheaper to produce than classroom courses. Partnerships with other colleges and universities have helped them to deliver more courses more often.

E-LEARNING TO ENHANCE EXISTING COURSES OR AS STAND-ALONE COURSES

The dominant teaching model in universities and colleges is the lecture/assignment model where teachers present basic materials and students submit a series of assignments for grading. Increasingly though, professors are developing class Web sites and augmenting the lecture courses with materials easily found on the Web. Online course models used by professors include:

- Synchronous online courses with some requirement to meet on campus.
- Synchronous online courses complete with online discussions and assignments submitted by e-mail.
- Synchronous online courses with assignments submitted by mail.
- Asynchronous online courses with assignments submitted by mail
- Asynchronous courses with online exercises, discussions and assignments.

NOT ALL SUBJECTS CAN BE TAUGHT EFFECTIVELY ONLINE

The traditional survey course appears to be the most suitable for online distribution. It requires students to read assignments, participate in some online discussion and then submit assignments by mail or electronically. Professors note that skills courses may not work as well, since they eliminate the possibility for "over-the-shoulder" supervision from an on-site instructor. If the course requires hands on work, online may not be the best distribution system.

Most college departments, including journalism are at the stage of offering courses and not degrees on line. A notable exception is the University of Missouri, which offers a master's degree in media management in conjunction with the MU business school.

The master's degree usually takes resident students about two years to complete. It appears that the traditional curriculum is being required of the online students, including the requirement for a thesis or professional project. Journalism faculty are usually teaching the online courses as an overload. That is, in addition to the two courses usually deemed a full course load in universities.

Here's how some other universities are using online:

- The University of Memphis also has a master's degree in journalism. However that appears to be a totally theoretical Master of Arts degree with no hands-on courses.
- Ohio University's Scripps Howard School teaches courses in journalism, communication law and introduction to communication.
- University of Memphis offers courses in mass media and culture; introduction to public relations and public relations writing
- Indiana University offers introduction to mass communication and a course in writing for publications. Neither counts as credit toward a journalism degree.
- University of Georgia offers courses in newswriting, and reporting
- The London School of Journalism lists courses in newswriting, freelance and feature writing, copy editing and design, and media law.

Columbia University is using its capability to deliver a series of e-learning seminars. The seminars are free to resident students and faculty and focus on timely subjects. They can be a single session or a series of sessions. Two recent examples are:

- "Covering terrorism: How the media and terrorism shape public understanding," taught by a political science professor [2 sessions]
- "War reporting: Romance and reality," taught by a journalism professor

ONLINE COURSES MAY NOT BE CHEAPER

There are costs associated with the use of e-learning technology, including the administrative costs to provide e-mail and Internet connections for faculty and students. Administrators must also provide staff to help faculty adapt their existing courses to the new e-learning environment. There is also the cost associated with having teachers spend time to develop new exercises and opportunities for student interaction and discussions online. Presently, students usually pay more money for an online course. They also may have to buy or upgrade a home computer with access to the Internet.

WHAT WORKED FOR E-LEARNING JOURNALISM?

A major asset of e-learning is the collaboration that can take place. Through discussions online, students became bigger players in their own education and the education of their classmates. Including interactive exercises as part of the lessons became a very effective educational tool. Other effective approaches and the institutions using them include:

- The University of Queensland and the London School of Journalism mail "study packets" to students. Each packet contains hard copies of some of the readings and notes developed by the professor.

- Universities are increasingly forming partnerships with other schools to offer more courses more often. For example, Howard University's eCollege provider has over 200 university partners around the country. Also Stanford, Princeton, Oxford and Yale collaborated to launch the University for Lifelong learning to serve their 500,000 alumni.
- Some universities have assigned the oversight of e-learning programs to one administrator. At the University of North Carolina e-learning is led by an assistant dean.
- Indiana University, The University of South Queensland, and Florida State University all have developed very impressive tutorials online that are easily navigated. The tutorials include templates for adapting classroom courses for online. They also include good support to students beginning with directions on how to enroll in the course.

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

For those university professors have been slow to teach courses online, here are some reasons they cite:

- The time it takes to initially develop the course
- The energy needed to respond to students by e-mail and telephone
- The added burden of probably teaching the online course as an overload
- The involvement in online course development is not rewarded in promotion and tenure decisions
- Discomfort with the technology
- Concerns about the ability of e-learning to deliver the same quality of learning experience for their students

LINKS TO COLLEGE WEB SITES MENTIONED

<http://www.usq.edu.au/> University of South Queensland
<http://www.uga.edu/> University of Georgia
<http://www.indiana.edu/> Indiana University
<http://www.ohio.edu/> Ohio University
<http://www.howard.edu/> Howard University
<http://www.princeton.edu/index.shtml> Princeton University
<http://www.yale.edu/> Yale University
<http://www.oxford.edu/> Oxford University
<http://www.stanford.edu/> Stanford University
<http://www.memphis.edu/> University of Memphis
<http://www.fsu.edu/> Florida State University
<http://www.unc.edu/> University of North Carolina

We are deeply indebted to Prof. Debashis Aikat, associate professor/Media Futurist, Journalism/Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina, for helping us use the experiences of colleges and universities in our assessment of e-learning for Poynter.

Section 5 / Lessons Learned

In June 2002, Poynter conducted its first online teaching experience, an e-learning class entitled “Effective Lead Writing.” Its material was based on Chip Scanlan’s textbook “Reporting and Writing: Basics for the 21st Century.” Chip Scanlan and Howard Finberg adapted Chip’s material as a test of the potential of online teaching methods. We had three questions:

1. How does one build an effective e-learning course?
2. What would be the commitment by the faculty [and others] to present the course?
3. What would be the reaction of the students to an online teaching experience?

HOW TO BUILD AN E-LEARNING COURSE

The area Howard focused on was finding a vendor to provide us with the best technology tools to present Chip’s text in an e-learning format.

1. SELECTING A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

For this test, Howard looked at a number of online course development and management systems. While it is possible to develop an online education courses using only Web-authoring software, this method does not provide all of the tools Poynter would need to enroll students, manage assignments and track usage, and self-check or test material. Among the systems explored were WebCT, Blackboard and eCollege. Howard selected eCollege because it had Web-like authoring software and a variety of course management tools. Because it operates as an ASP [application service provider], eCollege manages all of the software on its servers.

For Poynter, using an eCollege solution would mean an investment in fees to use its services, which could be integrated into Poynter Online. With eCollege there would be no investment for servers and development to create a series of courses. eCollege also provides its customers with choices to easily brand their e-learning courses with their own distinct look and feel. On the other hand, there may be a possibility for Poynter to use its existing Web technology for e-learning; however, this choice would require the development of additional software by our vendor. This should be explored for the long-term, as it would provide Poynter with tighter integration with its online site and control of the software. *[For a partial list of eCollege’s customers, please see Appendix D of this section].*

Key elements of eCollege’s course-management tools are:

- The ability to manage enrollment. This would give Poynter a method to manage class size, if necessary. It is also way to keep track of those who enroll, which would be important if Poynter wants to encourage online students to attend an in-person seminar. eCollege does allow its customers to integrate enrollment into a client institution’s existing Web site. *[For screenshots of some of the management tools, please see Appendix A]*
- The ability to track student usage of various sections within the course. In the survey given to the News Coaches listserv, having a method to track course completion was ranked very high. This tool also is

important to help course developers [professors, etc] see if there are problems within the flow of an online course.

- Built-in tools for self-check or self-assessment; an online grade book, if desired.
- Tools to integrate rich media, such as Flash. While there were some problems with Macintosh users, Howard believes that Poynter can find the right combination of browser software and Mac OS. These kinds of challenges – finding the right browser and operating system combination – plague every ASP. They also plague delivery of content via the Internet.

For Howard, creating an effective online-learning experience meant taking skills from a variety of experiences: classroom teaching, Web design and effective presentation and training.

2. ADAPTING THE TEACHING MATERIAL

While on the surface, our online lead-writing course looks very much like a Web site, Chip and Howard tried to handle the material as a sequential learning experience. This meant taking apart Chip's text and reordering it for an e-learning course. It also meant developing exercises and self-checks to guide the e-students through an interactive environment. There were three such self-check exercises:

- **The Great Lead Hunt:** *"Use the knowledge you have gained in this section to take the Great Lead Hunt Quiz. Your task: find examples of four types of leads. Use the Web or your local newspaper. Make sure you include source information, such as date published."*
- **Revising a lead: A self-check test.** *"There are many good ways to enter a story. Just because a lead appears in print, even in the best newspapers, doesn't mean it can't be revised. In fact, it may build your confidence to rewrite a published lead. Here's the first paragraph about a robbery. It's 50 words long and takes three breaths to read it."*
- **Tell Me the News, Tell Me a Story: A Lead Writing Workshop:** *"To prepare you for the challenges of writing leads on deadline, here is a writing workshop that will enable you to put into practice the strategies and techniques covered in this course. In this section of the course there is an Assignment file that has the details of a breaking news story as well as notes taken at the scene and the transcript of an interview. Use these real-life reporting materials to practice your lead writing skills. Your assignment is to read the following material and then craft two leads. 1. Write a one paragraph straight news lead. This should be a "Tell me the news" lead. 2. Write a feature lead. This should be a "Tell me a story" lead.*

While it is possible to give these on a timed-basis, Chip and Howard decided to create this course as a self-paced learning experience. There was no time limit for students to complete an exercise. *[For an example of one of the tests and the grade-book tool, see Appendix A]*

THE STAFF COMMITMENT TO E-LEARNING

The two e-learning areas that will be the focus the staff's time and energy are adapting or creating course materials and mentoring the students during the online experience.

1. PREPARING THE TEACHING MATERIALS

How much time does it take to build an e-learning course? The easy answer: It depends. On the plus side, we had great material from Chip's book. On the minus side, it took time for us to overcome our lack of experience in building a course and using the existing on-line technology. It is our belief that the disadvantages will diminish with experience. Of course, some of this depends on which courseware programs Poynter purchases or creates. Ease of use is a key factor for the staff in building online courses. Also having someone help guide the faculty is an important consideration.

What will be important to learn is how long it might take to build a course without having a 'textbook foundation.' Poynter is exploring a couple of areas – including one within the Ethics group – to better understand this issue. We also need to understand how to integrate self-check or other feedback elements into courses that might not be obvious. From Howard's research and experiences, *interactivity* is a key aspect of online learning. He believes this is true for both college students and professionals.

At this time, it is hard to estimate the amount of time needed to develop a course. Much of the time spent on our initial effort will not be duplicated in the future. With experience will come speed.

Part of the challenge of using existing material, such as textbook lessons or collections of essays, is to make sure that material reads as part of an e-learning course. Repurposing can only go so far. Another advantage to eCollege's software is its ability to share exercises, tests and other material across a number of courses. Create a test for one Leadership course and it could be applied to another.

2. MENTORING TIME COMMITMENTS

While Chip and Howard built exercises into the Lead Writing course, they did not assign any points or grades. We wanted to try a model that also might be used with professionals who take the course. In addition, given the very busy schedule of the summer program, there was no online feedback from the professor as to how well a student did on the online exercises. One reason we did not attempt this was the in-person involvement by Chip with each student.

Chip and Howard estimate that providing the feedback to 15 students taking two self-checks and a workshop exercise might take three to five hours. That will need to be validated with the next Lead Writing class so Poynter might better estimate this commitment.

SO, HOW DID WE DO?

In a survey of the 15 summer program students⁶ who took the class, almost all [80%] said the course material was either effective or somewhat effective. Only one

⁶ The students were recent college graduates, half of whom have already started their professional careers. In one respect, this is the type of young professional that Poynter might reach with an e-learning program.

student had a negative response to the material. The effectiveness of the presentation was rated lower, with 60% of the students saying the course was effective or somewhat effective. One third [33.3%] was neutral on this topic. And one student was negative.

The lower rating on presentation might be a result of the comparison with the personal seminar sessions that students had encountered during the previous 10 days. It also might be a result of the initial difficulty some students had with the Web browsers in the news writing lab. Those browsers needed to be updated to see the Flash presentations.

It is interesting to note that almost 75% of the students had not taken an e-learning course previously.

The self-check exercises were an important aspect of the online experience, with 80% of the students feeling that the testing exercises were very valuable or somewhat valuable. One student had a negative reaction.

Howard also tracked the amount of time each student spent on the various sections within the course. The median time spent on the course was 3.1 hours. That ranged from a low of 2.0 to a high of 6.7. However, it is important to understand that this is a measurement of how long a student had his or her browser window open to a section in the course.

[For a complete look at how each student spent time, see Appendix B.]

Understanding how long a course takes is important, according our survey of the News Coaches. They thought they could allow staff members 1 to 3 hours per week to take an online course at work. Howard's research indicates that courses that are shorter and tightly focused tend to be more successful with our students.

One caveat to mention about this course: All of the students had been given Chip's textbook before of coming to Poynter. He told them to read the first four chapters. His Lead Writing material was taken from Chapter 4. And, being good students, many of them reported they had read the material prior to taking the online course. And while the online material was slightly different, it was still very familiar to the students.

Testing this material with journalists who have not read the textbook would be an important learning opportunity.

[For some of the comments from students sent via e-mails to Chip and Howard, see Appendix C.]

Appendix A / Screenshots from online course and course tools

Effective Lead Writing
Instructor: Chip Scanlan

Course Admin Gradebook Email Chat Search Doc Sharing Journal Webiography

Course Home

- Syllabus
- Calendar
- 1. Intro
- 2. Lead Types
- 3. Lead Myths
- 4. How To
- 5. Revising
- Workshop
- Finished?
- Resources
- Tutorial

Syllabus

Course Syllabus

Chip Scanlan
chipscan@poynter.org
Office: The Poynter Institute

As a reporter for twenty years, I wrote--and rewrote and sweated over--thousands of leads. My days in the newsroom gave me a healthy respect for the reporting and thinking behind an effective opening.

As a teacher at The Poynter Institute, a school for journalists, writing coach at newspapers big and small, and director of the National Writers Workshops, I've learned first-hand that reporters are hungry for practical ways to get better at writing leads.

This course, based on my book, *Reporting and Writing: Basics for the 21st Century*, is designed to provide a way for reporters to learn more about the art and craft of effective lead writing, at their own pace, without leaving their computers.

Feel free to email me your questions, comments and suggestions to chipscan@poynter.org or visit my Poynter faculty page at <http://poynter.org/faculty/c-scanlan.htm> for links to other articles about reporting and writing.

Course Objectives The purpose of this course is to help journalists improve their lead writing skills. Our objectives include:

Exit Course Logout

Introduction page to the course. It looks very much like a Web page.

Effective Lead Writing
Instructor: Chip Scanlan

Course Admin Gradebook Email Chat Search Doc Sharing Journal Webiography

Course Home

- Syllabus
- Calendar
- 1. Intro
- 2. Lead Types
- 3. Lead Myths
- 4. How To
- 5. Revising
- Workshop
- Finished?

Session 6: Workshop - Assignment

Tell Me the News, Tell Me a Story: A Lead Writing Workshop

To prepare you for the challenges of writing leads on deadline, here is a writing workshop that will enable you to put into practice the strategies and techniques covered in this course.

Your assignment is to read the following material and then craft a two leads. The first lead is for an online news Web site or a wire service. This should be a "Tell me the news" or "Breaking News" lead. The second lead should be a "Tell me a story" or "Next Day" lead. When you are ready to write your leads, just click on the "Self-check" line on the left. You have one hour in which to complete this self-check. You may revise your work as often as you wish. *Hint: You might want to print this section so you can refer to the notes as you write your lead.*

The Assignment

It's a dead Saturday in June. Everybody else in the world is at the beach; you're stuck on the early cops beat, the 3611 p.m. shift monitoring arrests, accidents and other police news. You're taking advantage of the lull to work on a Monday City Page feature when the city desk gets a call: There's a jumper on the police station roof. You and a photographer run out the door. It's 2 p.m.

At the Scene

You run into a stonewall at the stationhouse. The desk sergeant isn't talking and won't let you near the roof. But you luck out. The photographer's aunt lives in the high-rise apartment building right next door to the police station. You spend the next 90 minutes watching the drama from a window that looks directly onto the roof; however, you can't hear anything being said. Eventually, the jumper is talked out of leaping and is led back inside the stationhouse.

Exit Course Logout

An assignment page: Note the navigation [left side] to the other sections within the course. This allows the student to skip around, if desired.

BREAKING DOWN A LEAD

Gunmen Make Getaway on City Bus

Filed at 6:11 a.m. EDT

The Associated Press
May 10, 1997

NEW YORK -- Heavily armed gunmen ambushed a payroll delivery and got away with \$50,000 after spraying a quiet street with bullets, critically wounding a moonlighting off-duty detective and a retired police officer

WHO
Heavily armed gunmen
Moonlighting off-duty detective
Retired police officer

WHAT
Ambushed payroll delivery
Critically wounding

WHERE
Quiet New York Street

WHEN
Not in lead

WHY
\$50,000

HOW
Spraying with bullets

Analysis: Aimed at a nationwide audience, this wire service story focuses on the event and players (cops and robbers). Characterizes place ("quiet") but doesn't give precise location. Length: 30 words.
Grade: A. Vivid, clear, economical

An example of the use of Flash within the course: As the student puts his/her cursor within the story, elements on the right are highlighted.

Effective Lead Writing
Instructor: Clay Swank

Course Admin Gradebook Email Chat Search Doc Sharing Journal Weblography

Course Home

- Syllabus
- Calendar
- 1. Intro
- 2. Lead Types
 - Reading
 - Exploration...
 - 2. Lead Types
 - Reading
 - Reading
 - Behind the...
 - Quiz
 - 3. Lead Myths
 - 4. How To
 - 5. Revising
 - Workshop
 - Finished?
 - Resources
- Tutorial

Exit Course Logout

Session 2: 2. Lead Types - Reading

Two Types of Leads: "Tell Me the News," "Tell Me a Story"

At *The Oregonian*, a paper with a long and dedicated history to good writing, team leaders met to talk about a problem: Too many stories were beginning with anecdotal leads. Theirs wasn't the first newsroom staff to confront the debate over hard vs. soft leads. In 1982, Mitchell Stephens and Gerald Lanson gave a catchy name to leads that took too long to get to the point. They called them a symptom of "Tell-O journalism." Rightly, they complained that readers had to wait too long to find out the point of the story.

What set *The Oregonian's* discussion apart was the way Jack Hart, the paper's staff development editor, framed the problem. "Newsrooms lack an adequate writing lexicon," Hart wrote in *Second Takes*, his monthly newsletter. "That shortcoming cripples conversation between writers and editors, limits creativity and restricts us all to a few tired story forms."

At *The Oregonian*, what seemed to be an overreliance on anecdotal leads actually highlighted a lack of precision in the way the paper's staff members described their writing, "calling everything other than a straight news lead an anecdotal lead," as one team leader put it.

To remedy the situation, Hart assembled a useful *Lexicon of Leads* -- 14 types, illustrated by examples from the paper and grouped under the headings "Straight Leads," "Feature Leads" and "Dangerous Leads." (A lexicon is a collection of terms that applies to a particular skill or field of study.)

Hart's "Lexicon of Leads" is the latest and, to my mind, one of the best examples of a continuing effort by journalists and teachers to improve news writing by better understanding what reporters do with language and why.

In his reporting textbooks, journalism professor Melvin Mencher argued that there are only two types of leads: direct and delayed. One gets to the point immediately, the may take a while. I'd expand that notion. Like Mencher, I believe that there are, essentially, two types of leads, each of which responds to a reader's central interest.

A reading assignment that includes links to material on the Web. In this case, Jack Hart's "Lexicon of Leads."

The screenshot shows the 'Effective Lead Writing' course interface. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with sections: Course Home, 1. Intro, 2. Lead Types, 3. Lead Myths, 4. How To, and 5. Revising. The main content area is titled 'Session 5 : 5. Revising - Self-check'. It includes a 'Revising Leads' section with a box containing settings: 'Access Date(s): No dates set.', 'Number of times Self-check can be taken: Unlimited', and 'Time allowed to complete Self-check: Unlimited'. Below this is a 'Revising a lead: A self-check test' section with a paragraph of text about a robbery in Queens. A text box contains the following text: 'NEW YORK -- A frenzied crossfire broke the morning calm of a quiet Queens neighborhood Friday as masked robbers ambushed the two guards of a payroll shipment, leaving the security men -- a retired police officer and an off-duty detective -- bleeding on the sidewalk with more than a dozen bullet wounds, the authorities said.' Below the text box is a question: 'How would you make this lead shorter?'. The bottom of the interface has 'Exit Course' and 'Logout' buttons.

A self-check test on revising a lead. Note the ability to set date and time for testing.

The screenshot shows the 'Autograde Summary' interface. At the top, there is a 'Show grade to student:' checkbox which is checked. Below this are 'Save Changes' and 'Save and Close' buttons. The main section is titled 'Autograde Summary' and contains the text: 'The computed results for this student's exam are below. To allow this student to take the entire exam over, click "Clear Answers" (erasing current answers). You can also grant additional time to complete the exam.' To the right of this text are fields for 'Date Taken: Jun 23 2002', 'Time Spent: 0:01', and 'Points Received: 0 / 0'. Below this is a table with columns: 'Question Type:', '# Questions:', and '# Correct:'. The table shows 'Essay' for the question type, '1' for the number of questions, and 'N/A' for the number of correct answers. Below the table are 'Clear Answers', 'Grant', 'additional minutes:', and 'Grant' buttons. The 'Grade Details' section follows, with the text: 'You can view and comment on this student's actual exam answers below, or change point values to suit the individual student. (Changed scores will appear in the autograde summary, but will not automatically be included in the final grade.)'. Below this is a list of questions, with the first one being '1. Question: Revise the following lead'. The question text is: 'NEW YORK -- A frenzied crossfire broke the morning calm of a quiet Queens neighborhood Friday as masked robbers ambushed the two guards of a payroll shipment, leaving the security men -- a retired police officer and an off-duty detective -- bleeding on the sidewalk with more than a dozen bullet wounds, the authorities said.' Below the question text is a text box for the student's answer, which contains: 'NEW YORK -- Masked men shot two security guards during a robbery of a payroll shipment in Queens Friday morning.' Below the answer box are fields for 'Points Received:' and 'Comments:'. At the bottom of the interface are 'Save Changes' and 'Save and Close' buttons.

The course management tool that allows the professor to see the students work and then offer comments and/or points or a grade. Points and grades are optional. Comments can be shared with the student.

Course Enrollment

General Course Info | Style Manager | **Course Enrollment** | Group Management

Add New User(s)

Enrollment Options :

Class Roster
To edit a user's status within your course or drop a user from your course, click on the user's last name.

Active Members :

| Last Name | First Name | Email Address | Status |
|--------------------------|------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Scanlan | Chip | chipsan@poynter.org | Professor |
| Finberg | Howard | hfinberg@poynter.org | Teaching Assistant |
| Mitchell | Bill | bmitch@poynter.org | Teaching Assistant |
| Conneen | Anne | aconneen@poynter.org | Student |
| Connolly | Michael | Mconnolly@poynter.org | Student |
| Daniels | Cynthia | Cdaniels@poynter.org | Student |
| Davis | Kristin | Kdavis@poynter.org | Student |
| Finberg | Ira | finbergh@earthlink.net | Student |

Course enrollment area: You can enroll students individually or in groups.

Chat

Chat | Add New Rooms

Back

User: Howard_Finberg Room: Live4_792440r0 Room Users: 1

Howard_Finberg

SEND

User Options
Color Option
Chat Options

Private chat area for the class: This is optional

Effective Lead Writing
Instructor: Clay Scuderi

Course Admin Gradebook Email Chat Search Doc Sharing Journal **Weblography**

Course Home
Syllabus
Calendar
1. Intro
2. Lead Types
3. Lead Myths
4. How To
5. Revising
Workshop
Finished?
Resources
Tutorial

Weblography

Search Weblography : Go

The weblography contains 2 entries. To search for specific entries, use the keyword search above.

+ Add New Entry + Add/Edit Categories

Sort by: date|category|submitter

| Entries | Category | Submitter |
|---|----------|----------------|
| The Digital Futurist Consultancy < www.digitalfuturist.com > [22 Jul 02] A link to another interesting Web site | General | Howard Finberg |
| Poynter on the Web / PoynterOnline The faculty and staff at The Poynter Institute < poynter.org > [22 Jul 02] The Best place for journalists on the Web | General | Howard Finberg |

Exit Course Logout

A Weblography or a list of links: These could be course specific or “college” specific. They are searchable.

Effective Lead Writing
Instructor: Clay Scuderi

Course Admin Gradebook Email Chat Search Doc Sharing **Journal** Weblography

Course Home
Syllabus
Calendar
1. Intro
2. Lead Types
3. Lead Myths
4. How To
5. Revising
Workshop
Finished?
Resources
Tutorial

Journal

Select a Journal : Go

Howard Finberg

+ Add New Entry

| Journal Entries | Last Modified |
|---|--------------------------|
| Is a Journal as Blog This could be a way that students could share thoughts and other issues | Howard Finberg 22 Jul 02 |

Expand All

Edit Delete

Exit Course Logout

Journal area, which can be private or public. Similar to a Web log or journal, sometimes called a “blog.” [Not shown is the Document sharing area. Stories and other files can be shared within a class.]

Appendix B / Time Spent by Poynter E-learning Students

| <i>Last Name</i> | <i>First Name</i> | <i>Course Home</i> | <i>Session 1 / Intro</i> | <i>Session 2 / Lead Types</i> | <i>Session 3 / Lead Myths</i> | <i>Session 4 / How to</i> | <i>Session 5 / Revising</i> | <i>Session 6 / Workshop</i> | <i>Total Minutes</i> | <i>Total Hours</i> |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Connolly | Michael | 52 | 3 | 89 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 18 | 186 | 3.1 |
| Daniels | Cynthia | 1 | 8 | 57 | 6 | 11 | 9 | 24 | 119 | 2.0 |
| Davis | Kristin | -- | 7 | 74 | 8 | 11 | 8 | 36 | 146 | 2.4 |
| Hebert | Marc | 8 | 67 | 49 | 6 | -- | 9 | 47 | 187 | 3.1 |
| Iwamoto | Karen | 12 | 10 | 24 | -- | 8 | 8 | 85 | 147 | 2.5 |
| Kvasager | Whitney | 8 | 47 | 104 | 9 | 34 | 36 | 52 | 289 | 4.8 |
| Manry | Kaitlin | 47 | 7 | 59 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 43 | 182 | 3.0 |
| Eisenberg | Michelle | 4 | 9 | 124 | 48 | 1 | 19 | 20 | 271 | 4.5 |
| Murphy | Katy | 30 | 5 | 86 | 5 | 10 | 9 | 36 | 180 | 3.0 |
| Newbury | Sara | 3 | 7 | 79 | 10 | 16 | 21 | 32 | 168 | 2.8 |
| Ortiz | Erik | 2 | 11 | 159 | 1 | 97 | 21 | 64 | 357 | 6.0 |
| Prado | Caroline | 10 | 8 | 28 | 3 | 10 | 73 | 7 | 139 | 2.3 |
| Sevilla | Joan | 12 | 15 | 167 | 27 | 4 | 13 | 72 | 311 | 5.2 |
| Sloan | Robin | 5 | 6 | 36 | 35 | 52 | 18 | 43 | 196 | 3.3 |
| Sturrock | Timothy | 54 | 3 | 156 | 14 | 42 | 18 | 115 | 403 | 6.7 |
| Taylor | Michael | 1 | 5 | 127 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 100 | 251 | 4.2 |
| Valencia | Karina | 48 | 56 | 27 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 131 | 2.2 |
| <i>Average</i> | | <i>18.56</i> | <i>16.12</i> | <i>85.00</i> | <i>12.80</i> | <i>21.00</i> | <i>17.75</i> | <i>49.63</i> | <i>215.47</i> | <i>3.6</i> |
| Median | | 9.0 | 8.0 | 79.0 | 7.0 | 10.0 | 11.0 | 43.0 | 186.0 | 3.1 |

Appendix C / Student Comments and Survey

The students were asked to send their comments after their first session and then at the end of the course. The follow are a mixture of those comments.

So far, the lessons have been very informative. I know I've already learned a lot--and an answer to a plaguing question-- are straight news leads dead? The answer--there is a time and a place for everything. In a half hour, I got up to Part Two: Lead Types, the second reading. Just one suggestion: audio or visuals might be helpful in this first part to break up a lot of reading. While it is very informative, it does get rather lengthy without a break from it.

--*Kristin Davis*

Hi guys,

Everything seems to be working well on the website when I use IE instead of Netscape. However, the exploration section of the introduction isn't working. Maybe there should be a printable version of the readings section. My eyes get tired from staring at the screen for so long and I find myself just scanning after the second paragraph. My first impression of this program is that I won't be able to complete it in one section. I'll have to come back in short-medium periods. It's too much to really absorb all at once.

--*Karen Iwamoto*

Chip & Howard,

Overall, the course looks really cool. The "Great Lead Hunt" is slick!

Good readings, too, but they could [I think] be "chunked" even further -- some of Chip's sections broken into component bits. I think the website webmonkey.com does a really nice job of breaking its articles -- all educational in a sense, I guess -- down into very manageable discrete chunks, all of them almost with a little "lead" of their own... it would take some re-tooling of the readings, but I think it help to avoid "Internet text fatigue." Overall, seems neat so far.

--*Robin Sloan*

1] The toolbar on the left side of the screen should be movable. This would allow readers to narrow it as they read.

2] It is not possible to print the full screen of the material. The Lexicon of Leads is worth printing, but no print feature is available.

3] The directions in the "Lead Types" quiz are not clear. Does the word "find" imply that I cut and past leads of the Internet news sources and submit them or find leads that I have written the past that fall into the required category? Also, should I cut and paste the entire story to give the person grading my quiz a more complete understanding of the lead?

4] Perhaps summarize the four types of lead myths as the end of "Exploding the Myths of Lead Writing"

5] I like the fact that there are NOT too many quizzes.

6] I enjoy seeing how long it took me to complete the quiz.

--*Marc K. Hébert*

Design of site is simple, which is good. It took me about three hours to finish. If I did not already have the text book, the reading would be helpful.

-- *Erik Ortiz*

Hi there

I just finished the e-learning course and I have some additional comments to make. First, I think we all could have gotten more out of it last week before we went over leads and our first stories, so we could have used it for them. Second, since we read the textbook, it was repetitious. One or the other is okay. Third, it is hard to navigate the site at times and places.

It is a great start, and I am honored to be part of the first class, but it needs some work, but with some work, could be great to people who aren't as lucky as me to have access to Chip and all the others at Poynter.

-- *Michelle Mostovy-Eisenberg*

I found this site very informative and I learned a lot about the different kinds of leads. Not being a journalism major, I had no clue what they were called.

-- *Katy Murphy*

Italics are very hard for me to read on the internet. The presentation of the course that's in Italics could look a little more interesting, and be a little easier to read. The first lesson is elementary. The second lesson is good. The menu on the side could let students know what they have completed, and the specific reading's titles.

-- *Timothy Sturrock*

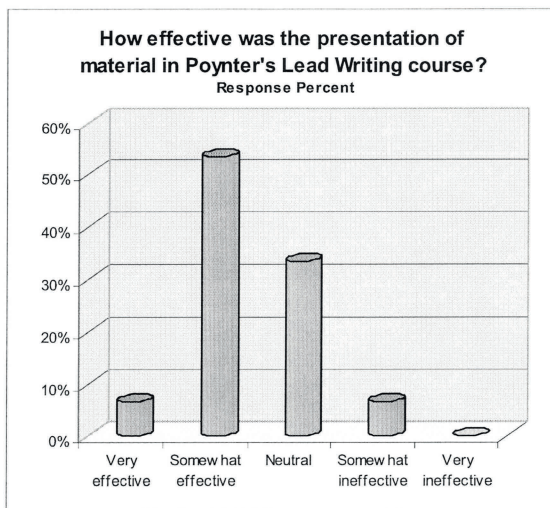
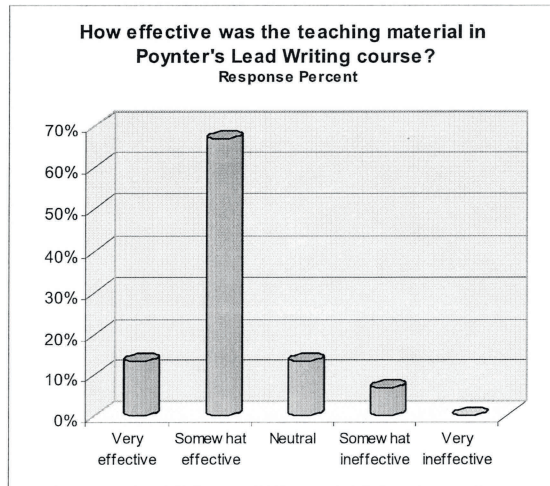
Hi - Thanks for letting us take the course. I like the layout of the opening page. I liked knowing what the course entailed and being able to browse the sections before choosing a starting place. I thought some of the material was pretty basic; stuff that teachers emphasize in school, but I guess it can't hurt to include. Thanks again

-- *Kaitlin Manry*

RESULTS OF SURVEY

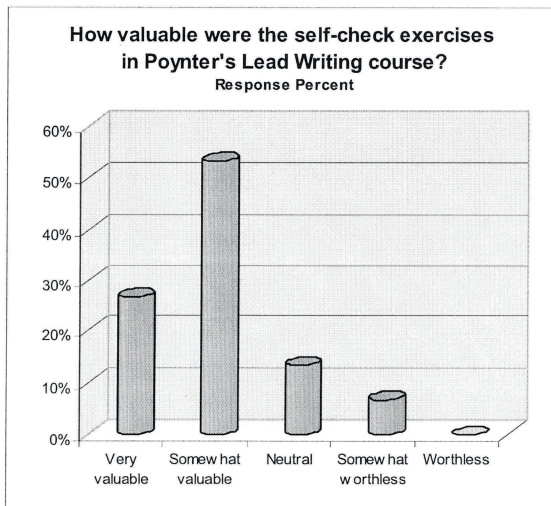
The follow are the results of the survey the students completed after taking the course.

| Have you taken any other online courses? | |
|--|----------------|
| | Response Total |
| Yes | 4 |
| No | 11 |
| Not sure | 0 |
| <i>Total Respondents</i> | <i>15</i> |



Did you participate in the discussion forum?


| | Response Total |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 7 |
| No | 8 |
| <i>Total Respondents</i> | <i>15</i> |



How many hours did you spend on the course?

| | Response Total |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1-2 hours | 4 |
| 2-3 hours | 7 |
| 3-4 hours | 4 |
| 4-5 hours | 0 |
| More than 5 hours | 0 |
| <i>Total Respondents</i> | <i>15</i> |

Appendix D / eCollege Customer List [partial]


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Customers

eCollegesm partners with colleges, universities, K-12 school districts and corporate training organizations to design, build and support eLearning communities.

| | |
|--|--|
| Alliant International University | Mt. Sierra College |
| American Education Centers Inc | Naropa University |
| Anderson University | National Association of Insurance Commissioners |
| Arapahoe Community College | National Association of Realtors |
| Arizona Institute of Business and Technology | National Automobile Dealers Association |
| Association of Yale Alumni | National University |
| Avici Systems | Neumann College |
| Azusa Pacific University | New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary |
| Baptist College of Florida | New England College of Finance |
| Barton County Community College | Newman University |
| BeckerConviser CPA Review Course Online | North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University |
| Bishop State Community College | North Carolina Central |
| Bismarck State College | North Dakota State College of Science |
| Blue Mountain Community College | North Dakota State University |
| Butterworth-Heinemann | Northeastern Junior College |
| Cabrini College | Northwest Missouri State University |
| California State University - Hayward | Northwestern Business College |
| Cedar Crest College | Northwood University |
| Cedarville University | Nyack College |
| CELESQ.com | Oral Roberts University |
| Centennial College | Oregon Health Sciences University |
| Chapman University | Oregon Institute of Technology |
| Chicago State University | Oregon University System |
| Christian University GlobalNet (CUGN) | OSF Healthcare Online |
| Cincinnati State Technical and Community College | Otero Junior College |
| Clarkson College | Pace University |
| Clovis Community College | Palm Beach Atlantic |
| Colby Community College | Palmer College of Chiropractic |
| College of Santa Fe | Peirce College |
| Colorado Christian University | Pennsylvania College of Podiatric Medicine |
| Colorado Community College Online | Pfeiffer University |
| Colorado Northwestern Community College | Philadelphia University |
| Colorado School of Mines | Phoenix Special Programs and Academies |
| Columbia College | Pikes Peak Community College |
| Columbus State University | Point Loma Nazarene University |
| Community College of Aurora | Pratt Community College |
| Community College of Denver | Pueblo Community College |
| Connecticut State University | Quality Systems Group, Inc. |
| Compliance Solutions, Inc. | Red Rocks Community College |
| Construction Arbitrator & CE Sponsor | Resource Partners International, LLC |
| Continuing Education for the Healthcare Professional | Rigby Education Professional Development |
| Crown College | Robert Morris College - IL |
| Des Moines Area Community College | Robert Morris College - PA |
| DeVry Online | Roger Williams University |
| Dodge City Community College | Rogers State University |
| Durham Virtual High School | Rollins College |
| Drexel University | Rutgers University |
| Earth Tech | Saint Joseph's University |
| East Carolina University | San Francisco State University |
| Eastern Michigan University | San Joaquin Delta College |
| Eastern Nazarene College | Santa Monica College |
| Eastern Oregon University | Sarasota County Technical Institute |
| ECPI College of Technology | Seton Hall University |
| EdUSA | Seward County Community College |
| EduKan | Sequoia Institute |
| El Paso Community College | Shari Levitin Group |
| EMUWorldWide | Siena Heights University |
| Fairleigh Dickinson University | Simmons College |

Section 6 /Listening to the News Coaches

This section outlines the results from an informal survey⁷ of newspaper trainers and others on the “News Coach” listserv, which is hosted by Poynter.

The goal of the survey is to get a better sense of the interest in e-learning or online training for journalists. The idea of the survey was triggered by the release this summer of the Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations report on training. As the writing of this memo we had 70 respondents, 15 of which were from the News Coach meeting last week.

In the Presidents Council’s training report, almost half of news executives surveyed [48%] said they would seriously consider using online distance learning program. The results in our News Coaches survey were even higher, with almost 60% saying they are very interested in “having access to training or professional development through an online distance learning program.” When you combine the “how interested” responses of “a lot” and “somewhat” the response is 87.2%. [See chart 1]

According to the survey, an online program could be effective across a variety of courses. When asked, the News Coaches survey respondents believed that e-learning could be most effective in teaching “journalism skills” [43%] and “journalism ethics, values and legal issues” [43%]. Only a third of the coaches believe that content or beat training could be *most effectively* taught by e-learning methods. However, more than half [55%] said that content/beat online training could be *somewhat* effective. [See chart 2]

The survey also asked what type of journalist would benefit most by taking an e-learning course. The respondents said that copy editors would benefit the most, followed by beat reporters, general assignment reporters and graphics personnel. The survey respondents thought news managers and assignment desk editors would get less benefit from e-learning courses. Since the survey group is drawn mostly from the newspaper world, the high “don’t know” response regarding “Producers” is to be expected. [See chart 3]

There are several other interesting aspects to the survey results:

- The amount of company time for such courses should be kept short; the overwhelming [69%] majority of the survey respondents estimated that would allow 1 to 3 hours per week for a staff member to take an e-learning course.
- While almost half of the respondents thought their companies would pay for journalists to take online courses “*on their own time*.” About a third [38%] didn’t know or were unsure who would pay.
- It is important [74%] to the news coaches that the online course provider [Poynter, for example] report back to news organization as to the student’s completion of the coursework.

More than 30 of the respondents are willing to be contacted if we want further information. In addition, there were several interesting comments left by respondents:

“Recognizing that people learn in different ways, it may be that online courses would not be suited for all staff members. Under any conditions the online segment should be woven into a broader program that includes mentoring and/or coaching on site. Additionally there should be strong follow-up to measure the effectiveness of the program.”

⁷ The key caveat: This is a self-selected survey of a group of individuals who are already highly motivated to find training solutions.

■

"Distance learning must be delivered in conjunction with classroom training especially for journalists. Distance learning cannot take the place of classroom courses but it can supplement them it can be useful for learning some technology it can be useful for reinforcing some things and also for quick updates beat info etc."

■

"Ideally online training programs should work more like a web site with short chunks of teaching and interactivity that people can easily leave and go back to. But by all means test the learners as they progress. Have a pretest and a posttest. A pretest can be humbling and focus the learner where he/she needs to improve allowing them to self-direct their learning [attention: adult learning principles!]. The posttest is rewarding. Both tests could be the basis for a conversation between the learner and the instructor and/or boss. One other thought: I urge you to introduce simple simple online interactive learning experiences from your web site to lure folks into trying something new. These can be single modules from a full training program you offer."

■

"I have no experience at all with such training. But I'd be willing to try, provided that it was cost-effective in our lean times. If it worked with an initial test we'd be willing to consider expanding."

There is still more to learn as to the aspects that would make a Poynter-based e-learning program successful. However, this survey gives us some good points to consider.

CHART 1

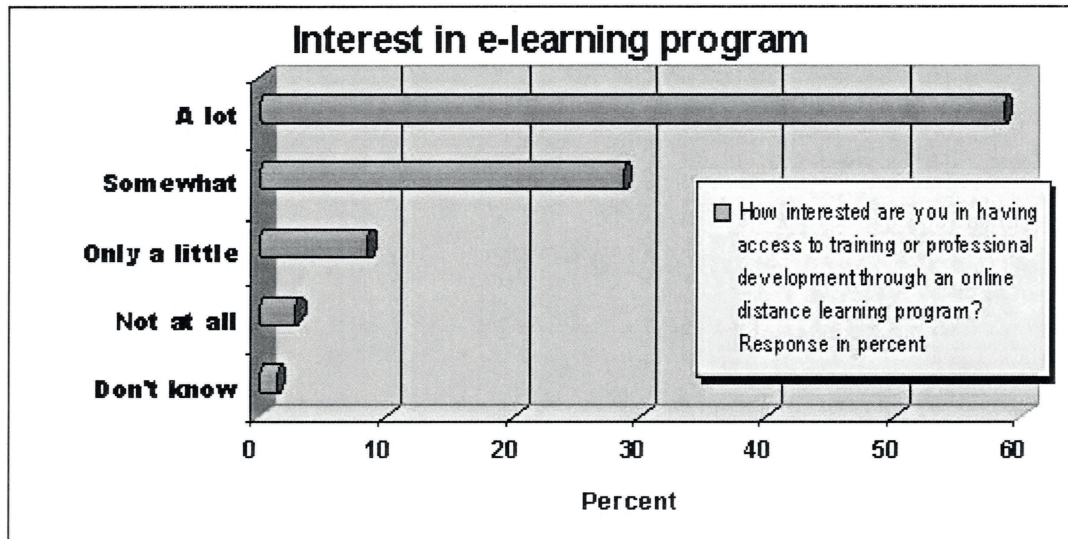


CHART 2

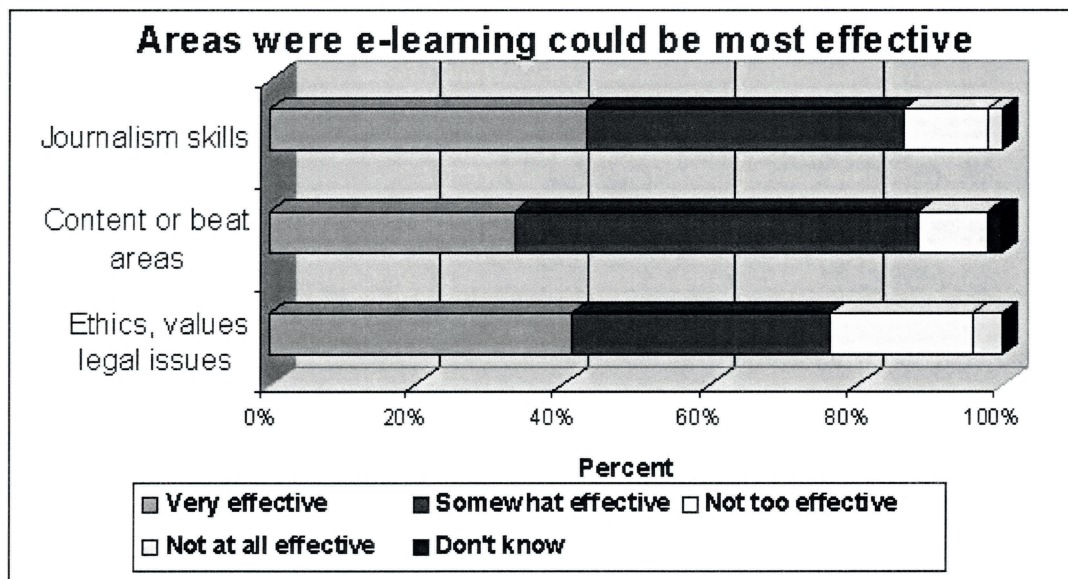
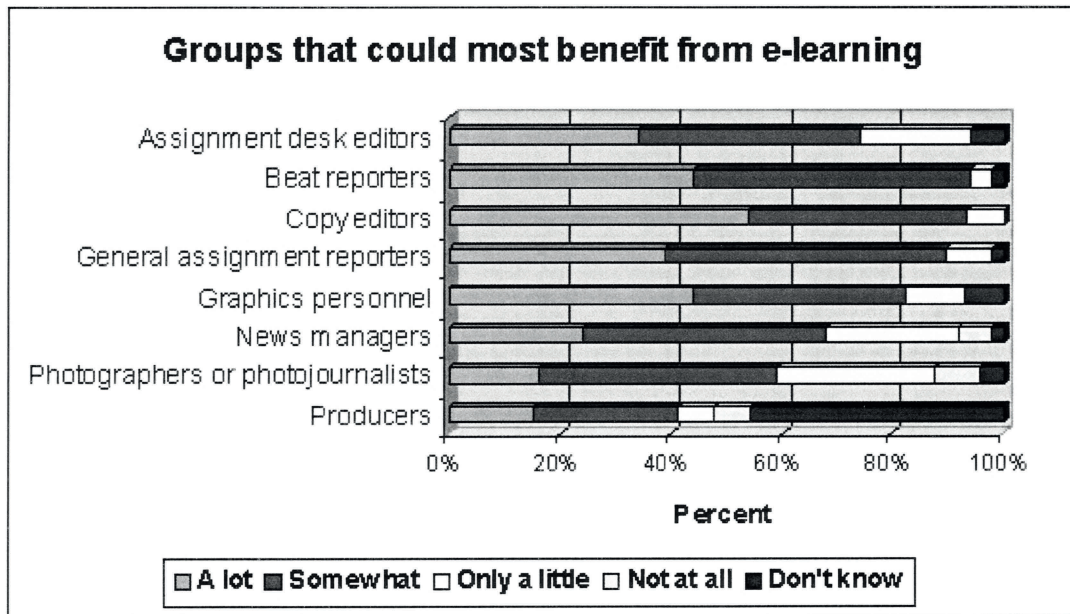


CHART 3

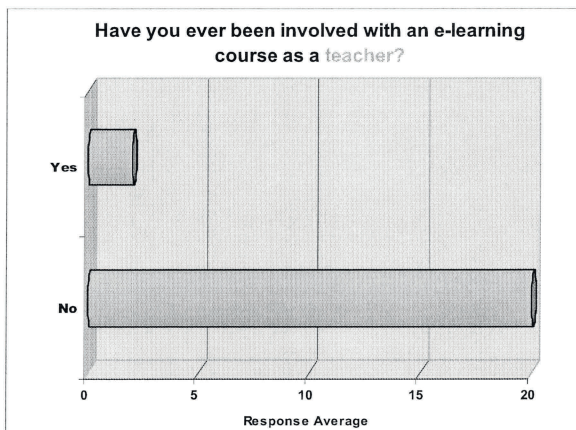
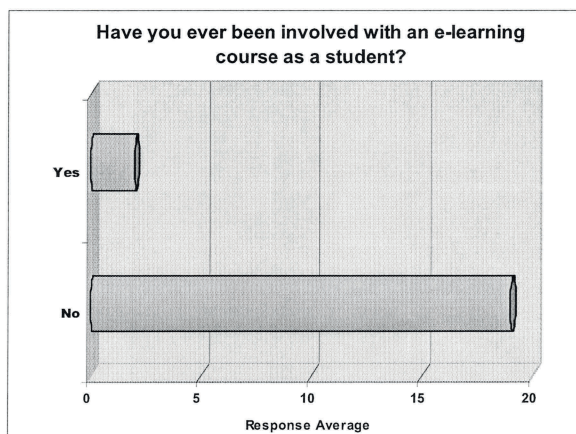


Section 7 /Listening to Poynter Faculty

This section is a report on the results of a survey sent to Poynter faculty, affiliates and associates. All faculty members participated, as did almost all affiliates and associates.

While some of the results are not overly surprising, it is very interesting to note the wide range of courses the faculty sees a potential e-learning modules. In addition, the suggestions regarding the type of students are equally sweeping.

The concern by the faculty, as expressed in the survey and comments, is about the time commitment. However, this might also be a lack of understanding of the process, as there is little experience with e-learning by faculty members as either students or teachers.



THE RANGE OF COURSES

The faculty were asked what courses they might like to teach online. Here are the suggestions, roughly grouped by topic area.

Leadership / Management

- ☐ Feedback
- ☐ Day-to-day coaching
- ☐ Long-form/periodic coaching
- ☐ Performance reviews
- ☐ Leadership issues
- ☐ Management practices
- ☐ Having the difficult conversation; preparation, best methods
- ☐ Managing the boss; analysis of present relationship, areas for improvement
- ☐ Diversity issues
- ☐ Leadership styles
- ☐ Building trust
- ☐ Leader as coach
- ☐ Managing life online

Writing / Reporting / Editing

- ☐ Sentence structure
- ☐ Word editing
- ☐ Power reporting follow-up
- ☐ Reporting across differences
- ☐ Finding/Interviewing reluctant sources
- ☐ Reporting/writing for college journalists
- ☐ Lead writing
- ☐ The art and craft of storytelling
- ☐ Reporting with the Internet
- ☐ Writing - for high school students
- ☐ Editing - for high school students
- ☐ Leadership - for high school students

Visual Journalism

- ☐ Picture editing
- ☐ Photojournalism ethics
- ☐ Seeing the news
- ☐ Information graphics
- ☐ Interactive graphics
- ☐ Print-online convergence
- ☐ Color with review of pages
- ☐ The power of contrast [design]
- ☐ Display typography
- ☐ Utilitarian typography

Ethics / Credibility / Diversity / Other

- ☐ Identifying stakeholders
- ☐ Religion 101
- ☐ Judging Internet credibility
- ☐ Tough calls
- ☐ Managing life online
- ☐ Diversity issues

Q: WHAT COULD POYNTER TEACH EFFECTIVELY ONLINE?

“

- *Just about any of our course work with the right expertise to direct our core teaching into effective e-learning model.*
- *I think we could teach nuts and bolts. I think it gets a lot trickier when you get into critical thinking lessons.*
- *I think to start we should look for opportunities to develop course materials that are completely self-directed. The energy and creativity could go into things that we really don't teach at length in our seminars because the subject is too narrow: grammar, color, math for journalists, etc.*
- *The Writing Process [and each of its parts]. Ethical Decision-making. Infographics.*
- *Since I have no experience teaching online, I am uncertain what Poynter could teach effectively. But I am quite intrigued with the idea and believe it has promise. I would be interested to see how we could translate the exercises that we do in the seminars and some of the workshop experience to an online audience.*
- *In addition to the list above there are several options: copy editing, lead writing, grid construction. The list of what could be taught goes on and on. But should we.*
- *Narrowly focused topics: Craft/Skill/Behavior focused topics.*
- *Many of the same topics we currently teach face to face but with less -- perhaps no -- interaction.*
- *I wouldn't presume to suggest individual courses in other areas but I think all faculty have the capacity to transfer their teaching to an e-learning format.*
- *Depends on the technology we want to invest in and faculty training.*
- *Writing; editing; leadership; ethics; design.*
- *I would really like to explore this. In September I hope to begin an online Masters program from Duquesne and I think I will have a much better idea of what potential things we could teach online. I know the Masters format will be more interactive in a real-time sense than we may be able to be--but I want to brainstorm ideas.*
- *Small quantitative things.*

- *Reporting, ethics; visual journalism to some extent*
- *Critique of news pages or Web screens. Color theory and practice in design*
- *Lots of craft units — writing, editing, design, photo editing, graphics. Maybe some leadership and work relationship units.*
- *Can't think of anything we could not teach well online. One-on-one coaching might be difficult to duplicate - not in content - but in terms of confidentiality. Then again it's amazing what people will write and send out to the universe so maybe that won't be a problem.*
- *Writing [and editing] seems to be a natural. I imagine there are some leadership courses/issues that would be a good fit. Diversity would I believe be a tougher one since discussion is so essential on those topics but perhaps Aly or Keith have a different notion. With ethics, discussion is valuable but I think we could craft a substantive interactive e-learning course that would serve students' needs and interests.*

Q: WHAT MATERIALS [PUBLISHED OR UNPUBLISHED] OF YOURS MIGHT PROVIDE USEFUL CONTENT FOR E-LEARNING?

“

- *Tip sheets, case studies on management or leadership situations diagnostic tools...*
- *[The] diversity chapter in Roy's Values & Craft book just published this year; The Essence of Excellence on Columbia's j-school Website and the Do We Check it at the Door report on the NAMME website; this piece from the website:
http://www.poynter.org/centerpiece/kw_divdemo.htm*
- *Got a great reservoir of materials on the writing process that Chip, I and others could tap into.*
- *The Teaching Editor chapter in The Effective Editor*
- *A tape from seminars that we could stream for participants to use in teaching their newsrooms after the student has been to a Poynter seminar themselves.*
- *Tip sheets on dealing with sources [particularly reluctant ones]. Interviewing techniques suggestions on reporting across cultures and differences*
- *Essays and tip sheets that have been useful instruction. Some examples included: Death in the Line of Duty; The Elian Case; Sports Illustrated Super Bowl Cover*
- *Handouts on specific topics.*
- *Seminar handouts. Material contained in my book: Reporting and Writing: Basics for the 21st Century. Original material.*
- *Most all*
- *If you take a look on our Leadership Column archive you will see that many of the columns might be re-written into a more e-learning format in which the user answers questions and gets results/advice.*
- *My books; PowerPoint presentations; handouts*
- *Color book; newspaper evolutions, a new book coming out: Pure Design is ideal for this*

- *Interactive color project that is already online. The grid is an animated presentation on the origins of the grid and how to apply it to news design*
- *I have notes and scripts from the sessions I've taught and mention above.*
- *There's a lot I've written [as well as good cases, essays, guidelines from Al, Aly, Keith, Kenny and others] that would be valuable in an e-learning course. Our collection of case studies would be good fodder. Some of my columns would be conversation generators.*

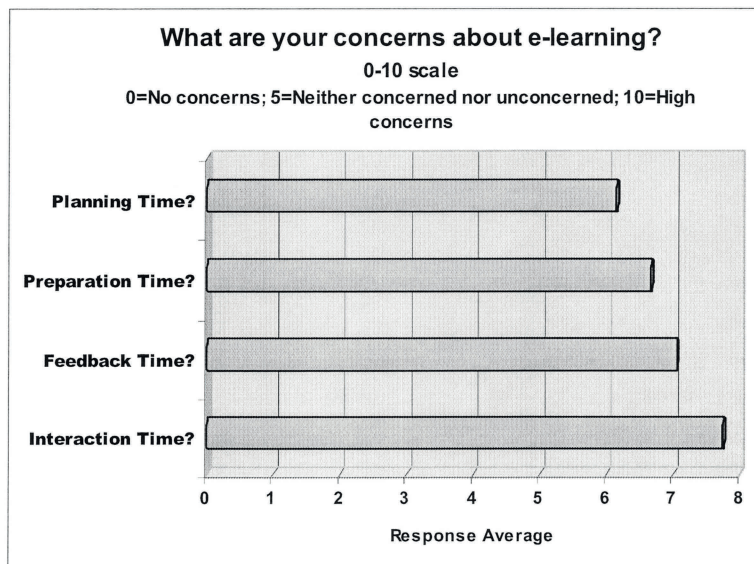
CONCERNS

We also asked the faculty about their concerns. We used a 0-10 scale, with 0 indicating that there are no concerns and 10 indicating that there are high concerns.

The four areas we asked about were:

1. Planning time
2. Preparation time
3. Feedback time
4. Interaction time

As you can see in the chart below, the highest concern involves the issue of interaction between student and faculty. These concerns, however, might be based on a lack of definition as to the type of e-learning Poynter would develop and a lack of understanding of the process of e-learning itself.



AUDIENCE AND PARTNERS

Who is the audience for a Poynter online course? As you can see from the results, that audience could be just about everyone in journalism.

Journalists whose organizations won't invest in off-site training. Journalists who may not be tapped for training because of limited dollars but who want to be better at the jobs.

Folks who can't come to Poynter; who aren't our type of journalist; high school and college students; small news organizations.

Newsroom journalists; College students and young journalists; Journalist wannabes. Those selected for a seminar [haven't attended yet]. Those applying for a seminar or conference [part of the application process].

Reporters, producers, newsroom leaders

Copy editors, Designers and young Picture Editors

Reporters. Producers. Editors. College Teachers. High School Teachers. College Journalism Students.

Writers, designers, copy editors, shooters, middle managers

Students. Professionals at all experience levels. Journalism teachers.

All journalists.

Especially staffers on small and medium sized newspapers and broadcast stations unable to send someone to St. Pete or elsewhere.

People new to a specific beat like medicine religion or education.

I think this would be a terrific way to leverage our core strengths and expand our reach.

Very universal audience, especially outside the U.S. Areas like South America, Europe, Africa

Intermediate to advanced designers working in newsrooms. Perhaps professors of design in journalism programs.

Inexperienced designers; designers who want to grow.

There are many potential partners for Poynter. Here are some of the faculty's suggestions.

APME, ASNE, Council of Presidents; any of the national journalism organizations that stage training workshops for members universities. **AEJMC**

Skies the limit: **ASNE. API. Knight. IU.**

ACES. IRE. SPJ. Minority journalism groups

IRE

NPPA. NABJ-VTF and AAJA-VTF.

Those with a specific audience such as **A.C.E.S., NPPA, PRNDI** etc. Also the minority journalism associations. I'm not so sure about the more broadly focused ones such as **RTNDA ASNE NAA APME.**

ACES IRE NABJ NAHJ AAJA NAJA RTNDA OJA and others

National Writers Workshops **ASNE APME**

SND plus any organization interested in visual journalism

ASNE APME RTNDA some universities such as **Medill and Southern Cal and Berkeley** possibly **FACS. The Online News Association. IRE.** The copy editors association. Same for the business editors.

RNA. NPPA. The Martin Marty Center for Public Religion.

API. Columbia University. SND

Society for News Design

Q: IF YOU HAVE OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT E-LEARNING PLEASE SHARE THERE HERE.

“

- *I see e-learning as an extension of publishing rather than as an extension of teaching. The key is providing more exercises and some modest degree of interactivity. But I'd have problems with faculty members teaching full courses from a distance. It seems inimical to our face-to-face style.*
- *As I said earlier I am very interested in the potential and possibilities of e-learning but am totally unfamiliar with what can be done. However I am eager to learn.*
- *I think that the idea of expanding our reach is a solid and valid purpose. I am not convinced that due to the time and effort involved and the lack of expertise on our part that everyone should be required to contribute or participate.*
- *My experience with e-learning this summer [Effective Lead Writing] demonstrated to me that previously developed teaching material can be transformed into e-learning courses. It also taught me that an essential ingredient of such teaching is the experience and passion that Howard Finberg contributes as a guide and collaborator.*
- *Again my one caveat is that we make sure that the newsroom leaders are aware of what we are doing with their staffers.*
- *I'd like to get the Leadership Group together to work on this as a team which is the way we approached the Leadership Column on Poynter.org. I also would like to gain a better understanding of how effective this teaching medium will be. Since I teach that Leadership is Personal—it should come as little surprise that I believe learning can be enhanced by the personal touch. How do we make e-learning personal?*
- *I really like the idea of exploring and experimenting in e-learning. I'm game to be at the head of the line. My only caveat is that we have someone here at Poynter who has strong interest and reasonable expertise to guide us and to organizationally lead the e-learning project. Faculty must be key players but I don't think any of us have the time or expertise to be the leader.*
- *My main concern of teaching visual journalism via the internet is its dependence on computer application. Many of the teachings of craft require using another application, say Quark, Dreamweaver or Flash. However I wonder if e-learning can be a first step before they arrive to Poynter or an off-site session. a sort of prerequisite before than can or invited to attend. I hope that helps.*